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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT USSR Plan to Attract Tourists

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While I was in [REDACTED] in September 1953, I had occasion to talk with a man from the Soviet Consulate there. The man I talked with was quite young -- probably in his early thirties. He was very courteous and certainly showed no ill feeling toward the US. He said he was a graduate of Moscow University, and that he had worked for the government for a number of years. The thing I was primarily interested in discussing with him was the possibility of free travel in the USSR in the near future. He told me he felt reasonably sure that in about one year (by the end of 1954) the USSR would be open to tourist travel. He said that the biggest stumbling block now for travel between the US and the USSR was the monetary exchange, and that when a satisfactory exchange between the ruble and the dollar could be worked out, the Soviet borders would probably be opened to tourist travel. He said that in addition to settling the exchange problem, the hotel and food situation needed to be improved before tourists could be accepted. He said he believed that by the end of 1954 conditions would be sufficiently improved to "put on a good show" for tourists.

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